Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown in the following listing of claims, which will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1.-39. (Canceled)

40. (New) A method for manipulating a sample comprising:

superimposing at least one digital, microscopic image of a section of at least one preparation on an image of a surface of the preparation;

placing at least one marking on the superimposed image, which marking defines a desired position at which at least one sample is to be punched out of the preparation;

punching out at least one sample from at least one defined position of at least one preparation with a needle; and

inserting said at least one sample into a hole in a sample carrier comprising at least one hole.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample is a tissue sample.

42. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the preparation is a prepared tissue specimen.

43. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the digital, microscopic image comprises several segments assembled prior to superimposing the image on the image of the surface of the preparation.

44. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the digital, microscopic image has been straightened or had artifacts eliminated prior to superimposing the image on the image of the surface of the preparation.

45. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the marking and/or its coordinates are saved in a database, together with an identifier for the preparation.

46. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein several digital section images can be selected for each preparation.

47.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein a display scale of section images, surface images and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.

48.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein an orientation of section images, surface images and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.

49.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be displaced.

50.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein color of section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.

51.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein a level of translucency of a surface image in relation to a section image can be modified.

52.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein transparency of a section image can be modified.

53.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein patient information or equivalent assigned to an identifier for the preparation, is displayed in combination with the superimposed image.

54.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the placed marking is characterized.

55.   (New) The method of claim 54, wherein the placed marking is numbered consecutively with other placed markings..

56.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the placed marking can be selected and erased.

57.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the placed marking can be selected and modified.

58.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein at least one annotation can be assigned to the placed marking.

59.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein a sample carrier for the insertion of the punched-out sample can be assigned to the placed markings.

60.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein a specific hole in the sample carrier can be assigned to the placed marking.

61.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein holes for samples in the sample carrier are arranged in a pattern and said pattern is formed by arrangement of the holes in the form of a binary code.

62.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein a position of the surface of the preparation is detected before the sample punching procedure and detected position values are saved in conjunction with an identifier for the preparation.

63.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein a position of the surface of the sample carrier is detected before the hole-punching procedure and detected position values are saved in conjunction with an identifier for the sample carrier.

64.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein punching depth of the sample punching and hole punching can be selected and assigned to the marking.

65.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample punching is started automatically after the placement of a last marking on a last preparation.

66.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample punching procedure can be interrupted and continued.

67.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein all holes are punched out from the sample carrier before the start of sample punching procedure.

68.   (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample punching needle and/or hole punching needle are cleaned at least after several sample punchings and/or hole punchings.

69.   (New) A device for manipulating samples comprising:

at least one needle for punching samples from preparations at defined positions during use; and

a control device to control the needle during use comprising:

a camera to take images of the surface of the tissue specimen;

a device for superimposing the images captured of the preparations with digital, microscopic images of sections of the preparations that have been archived in a storage device;

a monitor to display the superimposed images; and

a device provided to place markings for the determination of the defined sample-punching positions, which is connected with the control device.

70.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device for assembling the digital, microscopic images of sections of the preparations from several segments.

71.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising at least one needle to punch holes in sample carriers during use.

72.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a database for storing markings and/or their coordinates, an identifier for the preparation, and patient information or an equivalent.

73.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device to alter display scales of section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images.

74.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device to change orientation of section images, surface images, and/or the superimposed images.

75.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device to displace section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images.

76.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device to change color of the section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images.

77.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device to change a level of translucency of surface images in relation to section images.

78.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device to change transparency of the section images.

79.   (New) The device of claim 69, wherein the device for placing the markings to determine the defined punch positions is a computer mouse.

80.   (New) The device of claim 69, further comprising a device for detecting a position of the surface of the sample carriers and/or preparations during use.

81.   (New) The device of claim 80, further comprising a storage device for the detected position values of the sample carriers and/or preparations.